

REQUIREMENT 4: QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

Students who have fulfilled all course and language requirements may proceed to the oral qualifying examination. Students are expected to take the qualifying examination by the end of the third year. This is considered normative time by the department and the Graduate Division.

The Qualifying Examination consists of three parts of approximately equal time, which should be about thirty minutes each. Two of these parts examine students on each of their two historically defined fields, chosen from the list below--namely any two contiguous fields from this list, or any single field and a related field chosen from other Anglophone literatures. In most instances, the fields are contiguous if their numbers are consecutive. Contiguity can also be met by crossing national borders; thus, for example, field 4 (Seventeenth Century through Milton) counts as a field contiguous with field 10 (American Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries). Students with special research interests must petition to the Graduate Chair for approval to declare two noncontiguous fields.

Historical Fields

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| 1. Old English | 7. Romantic |
| 2. Middle English | 8. Victorian |
| 3. Sixteenth Century | 9. British Twentieth Century* |
| 4. Seventeenth Century through Milton | 10. American 17 th - & 18 th - Centuries |
| 5. Restoration and Early Eighteenth Century | 11. American Nineteenth Century |
| 6. Later Eighteenth Century | 12. American Twentieth Century* |

* An emphasis in either modern or contemporary literature must be specified

The English Department does not provide a single orals list for each historical field, because we believe Ph.D. students can benefit from constructing field lists themselves. We understand, however, that the EGA and the Graduate Office keep a record of student-generated lists and recognize that these are valuable study aids, available for students to examine and compare. We also encourage students to consult with faculty about the lists. This process should begin with the orals adviser, but may extend to all members of the committee, including the field examiners. Historical field lists are advisory rather than contractual and do not rule out the possibility that the conversation may range more broadly. While students may not consult historical field lists during the exam, faculty may use them to inform and focus their exam questions.

The third part examines students on their field statements and explores topics in preparation for the dissertation. A field statement of fifteen to thirty pages, plus a bibliography of no more than four pages, will be approved by the student's adviser and field statement examiner and then submitted to the Graduate Office, at least thirty days prior to the oral qualifying examination, for circulation to the full committee. (For students offering statements in fulfillment of requirements in other programs, such as Medieval Studies, this length may vary.) Failure to approve the field statement will delay the examination. The field statement is not a prospectus setting out the specific plan of research for a dissertation, but a broader and more preliminary engagement with the theoretical, methodological, and disciplinary resources that may best help a student work toward a prospectus. The field statement's bibliography provides the sources that inform the writing of the statement. The statement may proceed as a single discussion or may be modular in structure, articulating a series of questions and arguments about the works on the bibliography.

One full semester before the student intends to take this examination, he or she should submit for the approval of the Graduate Chair a departmental orals application, signed by the orals adviser, listing the two historical fields and a brief description of a third field. The application form is available on the Graduate Program website. The student and adviser together are encouraged to propose the names of appropriate

examiners; suggestions for the ‘outside examiner’ (see below) are especially welcome. There can be no guarantee, however, that the actual committee will match the proposed list. While students may wish to do ‘mock’ exams with their advisers as practice for the actual qualifying examinations, they should not do ‘mock’ exams with any member of the faculty who is a potential or actual field examiner.

Ph.D. qualifying examination committees will consist of five ladder faculty, at least three of whom must be from the English Department, who will serve in the following capacities:

- A. TWO FIELD EXAMINERS: Each of these examiners has the primary responsibility for one of the historically defined fields listed by the candidate in his or her description of the fields. A field examiner should expect to conduct a direct examination of approximately thirty minutes on that field.
- B. A FIELD STATEMENT EXAMINER: The field statement examiner should expect to conduct an examination of approximately thirty minutes on the candidate's field statement, circulated to the full committee prior to the exam.
- C. ONE GENERAL EXAMINER: The primary aim of the general examiner is to maintain an overview of the examination and to ensure that the standards of the Graduate Division and the Department have been met.
- D. THE CANDIDATE’S ADVISER: The faculty member primarily responsible for guiding the candidate in his or her selection and preparation of fields will also be on the committee. The adviser’s presence should reduce the ambiguities and misunderstandings that can arise between the candidate and the committee as to the nature and content of the fields under examination.

THE CHAIR: One of the examiners, though not the adviser, will chair the examination. The chair must be from the English Department and a member of the Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate. The chair ensures that the examination is well-conducted and thorough as well as fair to the candidate, that there is a judicious coverage of the material in breadth and depth, clear lines of questioning, and a variety of approaches to the material. The chair is also responsible for drafting the report of the examination results. The chair should circulate an initial draft to all exam committee members within seven days of the exam. While the chair may wish to incorporate suggestions from other committee members, ultimate authority over the content of the report remains with the chair (though any committee member has the option of filing a letter supplementing the chair’s report). The final report should be no more than 700 words and must be filed in the Graduate Office within 14 days of the exam. The chair of a qualifying examination cannot go on to become the candidate’s dissertation director.

THE OUTSIDE EXAMINER: The outside examiner must be a Berkeley Academic Senate member and serves as the Dean’s representative in order to lend the necessary balance and independence needed to ensure that the candidate’s mastery of the subject matter is broad and comprehensive. The outside examiner may serve as a field examiner or as the general examiner but cannot chair the exam. A faculty member whose appointment is split between another department and English cannot serve as the outside examiner.